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THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES
IN A NEW ARRANGEMENT AND TRANSLATION.

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[1 : 1. *The title.*]

1 THE WORDS OF KOHELETH BEN DAVID, KING IN JERUSALEM.

[1 : 2. *The theme.*]

2 SUPREME VANITY, saith Koheleth, SUPREME VANITY, THE WHOLE
IS VANITY!

[1 : 3-11. *Koheleth's philosophical basis—life a repetitious round.*]

3 What profit hath a man of all his toil in which he toileth under
the sun?

4 Generations continually go and come, but the earth forever
5 abideth. So, too, the sun riseth and setteth; again for his

6 place he is ever panting, there he riseth. Going southward
and circling northward, ever circling goeth the wind, and

7 upon its circuit ever returneth the wind. All the streams
flow continually to the sea, but the sea—it is not full; unto
the place whither the streams are flowing, thither they con-

8 tinue to flow. All words are feeble, man cannot [adequately]
give expression; the eye is not sated with seeing, nor the ear

9 with hearing. What has been? That is what shall be. And
what has been done? That is what shall be done. Yea, *there*

10 *is nothing new under the sun.* Is there a thing of which one
says: Look at this, it is new! Already for ages before it hath

11 had existence. There is no remembrance of those former
times; so also for those who are to follow there shall be no
remembrance among those who follow them.

[1 : 12-18. *Active accomplishment and reflective search for wisdom alike
fruitless.*]

12, 13 I, Koheleth, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. So I
gave myself to search into and to examine with the aid of
wisdom respecting all that is done under the heavens. (That
is an evil employment which God hath given men to be busied

- 14 in.) I have considered all the activities that are done under
the sun, and, behold, the whole is vanity and futility.
- 15 "What is crooked cannot be made straight," and
"What is not present cannot be weighed."
- 16 I said to myself: See! I have become great and have gathered
wisdom above everyone who was before me over Jerusalem,
- 17 and I myself have seen much of wisdom and knowledge. So
I gave myself up to become really acquainted with wisdom,
and [equally] with madness and folly. I have come to know
- 18 that this too is futility. For
"Abundance of wisdom involves abundance of vexation," and
"He that gathereth knowledge gathereth sorrow."

[2: 1-11. *In self-indulgence is no satisfaction.*]

- 1 I said to myself: Come now, let me test thee with joy; there-
2 fore look on pleasure. But, behold, that too is vanity! Of
laughter I came to say: 'Tis mad; and of joy: What does it
3 accomplish? I experimented upon myself by alluring my
flesh with wine, conducting myself meanwhile with wisdom;¹
also, by laying hold on folly, until I should see what was good
for mankind that they do under heaven during the days of
- 4, 5 their life. I multiplied my activities; I built me houses, I
planted me vineyards, I made me gardens and parks, and I
6 planted in them fruit trees of every description; I made me
pools of water to water therefrom the groves which produce
7 trees; I purchased me menservants and maidens, and sons-of-
the-house were mine; moreover, herds, oxen, and sheep, in
abundance I had beyond all who had been before me in Jeru-
8 salem; I gathered me up also silver and gold and treasures of
kings and [distant] provinces; I obtained me singers, men and
9 women, and delights of mankind—enormous possessions. So
I became great and made acquisitions above all who had been
before me in Jerusalem; withal, my wisdom remained with me.
- 10 And nothing which my eyes demanded kept I back from them.
I denied myself no joy; for I rejoiced because of all my pains,
11 and this was my portion out of all my painstaking. Then I
considered all my work which my hands had wrought and the
pains I had taken to work, and lo! the whole was vanity and
futility, and there was no profit under the sun.

¹ *L. e.*, "keeping myself under control."

[2:12-17. *Death and oblivion overtake alike sage and fool; life therefore is empty.*]

12 Then I turned to investigate wisdom and madness and folly; for what can the man do who shall follow the king? That which
13 they did long ago! And I considered [the statements] that
“Wisdom hath an advantage over folly.”

14 “The wise man—his eyes are in his head,
But the fool walketh in darkness.”

Yet I, even I, have come to know that one lot meets them all.

15 So I said to myself: Like the fool’s lot is that which will befall me; for what then have I been wise over-abundantly?

16 And I [further] reflected: The following is vanity. For there is no remembrance of the wise man forever more than of the fool; since in the days to come the whole will already have been long forgotten, and alas,

“The wise man dieth like the fool.”

17 Therefore I came to hate life, for evil unto me [seemed] the activity which was carried on under the sun, since the whole is vanity and futility.

[2:18-23. *A fool may enjoy the fruits of a wise man’s toil.*]

18 Moreover, I came to hate all my toil in which I had wearied myself under the sun, inasmuch as I must leave it behind me
19 to the man who shall be after me. Yet who knoweth whether a wise man he shall prove or a fool? Still he shall rule over all my toil in which I have wearied myself and for which I have acted wisely under the sun. This too is vanity.

20 So again I gave myself up to despair on account of all the toil
21 with which I had wearied myself under the sun. For here is a man whose toil is with wisdom and knowledge and success; yet to a man who hath not so wearied himself must he give it
22 as his portion. This too is vanity and a great evil. For what shall the man have in all his toil and his corroding care of heart in which he hath wearied himself under the sun?

23 For all his days are pangs, and vexation is his occupation; even in the night he taketh not rest. This also is very vanity.

[2:24-26. *Enjoyment of labor not a proof of God’s favor.*]

24 It is no good for a man that he eat and drink and cause himself to have enjoyment along with his toil. At this too have I looked, that

- 25 "From the hand of God does this come. For who, apart
 26 from him, can eat or who have enjoyment? Because, to a
 man who is good in his sight he giveth wisdom and knowl-
 edge and joy; but to him that sinneth he giveth the exercise
 of gathering and of collecting in order to give it to one who
 is good in the sight of God."

Even this is vanity and futility.

[3: 1-15. *Man's helplessness in face of divine foreordination of events.*]

- 1 For everything there is an appointed season ;
 And a time for every business under the heaven.
 2 A time to bear and a time to die ;
 A time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted ;
 3 A time to kill and a time to heal ;
 A time to break down and a time to build ;
 4 A time to weep and a time to laugh ;
 A time to mourn the dead and a time to dance ;
 5 A time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones
 together ;
 A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing ;
 6 A time to seek and a time to lose ;
 A time to keep and a time to throw away ;
 7 A time to rend and a time to sew ;
 A time to be silent and a time to speak ;
 8 A time to love and a time to hate.
 A time of war and a time of peace.
 9 What profit hath he that worketh in that wherewith he wearieth
 10 himself? I have considered the exercise in which God giveth
 11 mankind to exercise. The whole hath he made beautiful in
 its time ; also [the conception of] eternity hath he put into
 their heart, [yet] so that man cannot find out the work which
 12 God doeth from the beginning even to the end. I have come
 to know that there is nothing good in them except to be glad
 13 and to do good in one's life ; and also that every man who
 eateth and drinketh may find pleasure in all his toil—that is
 14 a gift of God. I have come to know that everything which
 God doeth is for ever ; unto it there is nothing to add, and
 from it nothing to take away ; and God hath done it that they
 may fear before him.
 15 What is has long existed,
 And what is to be came into being long ago,
 And God recalls² the past.

² *I. e.*, repeats.

[3: 16–22. *Man and beast are on the same level; that soul exists is a discredited hypothesis; the present the only known reality and opportunity.*]

16 Still farther I carried my investigations under the sun:

The place for justice—there was wickedness:

The place for righteousness—there [too] was wickedness.

17 I said to myself: The righteous and the wicked will God judge, for there is a time for every business and for every
18 work there. [Again] I said to myself: [It is] because of mankind, that God may prove them, and that they may see for themselves that they are as beasts.

19 Chance is mankind, chance are the beasts, and one chance is to them all: as is the death of one, so is the death of the other, all have one spirit; of superiority of man over beast there is
20 none, for the whole is vanity. All are going to the one place;
21 all are of dust, and all return to dust. Who knoweth the spirit of man that it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that it descendeth downward to the earth?

22 Wherefore I have come to see that there is nothing better for man than to rejoice in his activities, since this is his portion; for who can bring him to see what shall be after him?

[4: 1–8. *The prevalence of injustice, jealous rivalry, and miserliness confirm the conclusions already reached.*]

1 Then I turned about and considered all the oppressions which were wrought under the sun; and behold! the tear of the oppressed, but they had no comforter; and on the side of
2 their oppressors might, yet they had no comforter. So I felicitated the dead of long ago above the living who are yet
3 alive. And better than both of them is he who yet is not, who seeth not the evil work which is done under the sun.

4 I beheld, too, all the toil and all the prosperity in work, that this is the rivalry of man with his fellow; this also is vanity and futility.

5 “The fool foldeth his hands together and eateth his meat.”

6 “Better is a handful of rest

Than two hands full of toil and futility.”

7, 8 Once more I beheld vanity under the sun. There is one without a companion, neither son nor brother hath he; yet there is no end to all his toil, neither are his eyes sated with wealth.
“But for whom do I weary myself and deprive myself of

enjoyment?" [saith he]. This too is vanity, yea, an evil exercise.

[4:9-12. *The benefits of companionship.*]

9 Better the two than the one,

For they have an excellent reward in their toil.

10 For if they fall, the one can raise his companion; but woe to the one if he fall when there is none other to raise him.

11 Moreover, if two lie down [together], they are warm; but for

12 the one—how can he be warm? So, if an attack be made upon the one, the two will stand up against [the assailant], and the threefold cord³ will not quickly be broken.

[4:13-16. *Even monarchs are not exceptions to the general rule.*]

13 "Better a lad lowly and wise

Than a king old and foolish,"

14 if he know no longer [how] to receive admonition. For from a prison [the former] may go forth to reign, even though in

15 his kingdom he were born poor. I have attentively considered all the living who move under the sun along with the youth

16 [just named] who stands beneath [the king]. There is no end to all the people at whose head he is; yet those who come after will not rejoice in him. So even this is vanity and futility.

[4:17-5:6 (Eng. 5:1-7). *Prudential religion.*]

17 Guard thy feet when thou goest to the house of God: so wilt thou come nearer to obedience than when fools sacrifice; for

5:1 none of them have knowledge, so that they do evil. Make not haste with thy mouth, and let thy heart hurry not to utter a thing before God; for God is in heaven, but thou upon earth.

2 Therefore let thy words be few. For

"The dream cometh with much business,

And the voice of a fool with abundance of words."

3 When thou vowest a vow to God, delay not pay it, for

"There is no delight in fools."

Pay what thou vowest.

4 It is better that thou vow not than that thou vow and pay not.

5 Suffer not thy mouth to make thy flesh to sin, and say not before the angel⁴ that

"It was a mistake;"

why should God be angry

³ *I. e.*, three are better even than two.

⁴ *I. e.*, the priest.

- 6 because of thy voice and destroy the work of thy hands? For
 "In multitude of dreams and of words
 There is increase of vanities."

Yet fear thou God!

[5:7-19 (Eng. 5:8-20). *Riches inspire oppression; and even when rightly gained, they produce no real satisfaction.*]

- 7 If thou seest oppression of the poor and violation of justice and
 of righteousness in the province, wonder not at the matter; for
 "A high one over a high one watcheth,
 And high ones over them."
 8 So it is altogether profitable for a land that the king be devoted
 to the field.
 9 "A lover of silver with silver will not be sated;
 And he that loveth abundance hath not profit."
 This too is vanity.
 10 With increase of substance cometh increase of those who con-
 sume it, so what advantage is it to its possessor beyond the
 seeing with the eyes?
 11 "Sweet is the sleep of the serving man,
 Whether he eat little or much;
 But the abundance of the rich
 Permitteth him not to sleep."
 12 There is a sore evil I have considered under the sun; riches
 guarded by the owner to his hurt, then these riches perish
 13 through misfortune in business. And should he beget a son,
 there is nothing at all in his hand.
 14 "As he came from his mother's womb,
 Naked shall he return as he came,"
 and by his toil nothing at all shall he take which he can carry
 15 in his hand. And this too is a sore evil; in all respects as he
 came, so must he go, and what benefit hath he in that he toileth
 16 for wind? Yea, all his days he partaketh of darkness and
 multiplieth vexation, and O his sickness and wrath!
 17 Behold what I have come to regard good, what is delightful:
 to eat and to drink and to take enjoyment in all one's toil in
 which he toileth under the sun during the days of his life
 18 which God giveth him; for this is his portion. Moreover, to
 every man to whom God giveth riches and treasures and whom
 he hath permitted to eat of them and to take his portion and

- 19 to rejoice in his toil—this too is a gift of God. For he doth not greatly remember the days of his life, since God busieth him with the joy of his heart.

[6: 1-9. *Riches a disappointment, the grave the common end, desire never satisfied.*]

- 1 There is an evil I have seen under the sun, and it presseth
 2 heavily upon man: A man to whom God hath given riches
 and wealth and glory, and nothing is lacking to him of all
 that he desireth; yet God giveth him not the power to eat of
 it, since one of another family eateth it. This is vanity and
 3 an evil calamity. Though a man beget a hundred and live
 many years, yea, though many be the days of his years; yet if
 he be not sated with that which is good and if he have not burial,
 4 I affirm that better off than he is the untimely birth. For
 “In nothingness it came,
 And in darkness it goeth out,
 And with darkness is its name covered;
 5 Yea, the sun it saw not nor knew—,”
 6 this hath rest rather than he. So also, if he live a thousand
 years twice over, but of enjoyment did not partake. Are not
 all going to one place?
 7 All the toil of man is for his mouth, and still the self is not
 8 filled. For what profit hath the wise man above the fool;
 what the poor man who knoweth how to walk before the liv-
 ing? Better is the vision seen by the eye than the travail of
 9 the soul. This too is vanity and futility.

[6: 10-12. *Man rightly named “earth-son,” with no assurance of a future.*]

- 10 What [man] is was named long ago and known—that he is
 “man;”⁵ hence he cannot strive with Him who is mightier
 11 than he. Though there be words in abundance, they but
 12 increase vanity. In what is man the better? For who knoweth
 what is good for man in life? Few are the days of his vain
 life, and he spendeth them as a shadow; because who can
 point out to man what shall be after him under the sun?

[7: 1-14. *Maxims for conduct resulting from the foregoing discussion.*]

- 1 A [good] name is better than good ointment;
 And the day of death is better than the day of one’s birth.

⁵ *I. e.*, “earth-son.”

- 2 It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the banqueting hall.
(For that is the end of every man, and the living will lay it to heart.)
- 3 Sorrow is better than laughter.
(For by sadness of countenance the heart is improved.)
- 4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning ;
But the heart of a fool is in the house of mirth.
- 5 'Tis better to bear the reproof of a sage
Than for a man to listen to the song of fools.
- 6 For "Like the noise of thorns under the pot,
So is the laughter of the fool."
- 7 This also is vanity, that
Extortion befooleth a wise man,
And a bribe destroyeth his understanding.
- 8 The end of a matter is better than its beginning ;
Better is patience of spirit than haughtiness.
- 9 Haste not in thy spirit to be angry
(For anger resteth in the bosom of fools).
- 10 Say not: How is it that former days were better than these ?
(For not out of wisdom dost thou ask this).
- 11 A good thing is wisdom with an inheritance ;
And an advantage [is it] to those who behold the sun.
- 12 (For: "The shadow⁶ of wisdom is the shadow of wealth ;"
And: "It is a gain that knowledge of wisdom quickeneth its possessors.")
- 13 Consider the work of God
(For who can straighten that which he hath bent?).
- 14 In the day of prosperity take enjoyment,
And in the day of adversity consider
That God hath wrought this equally with that, in order that man may discover of what comes after nothing at all.
- [7 : 15-22. *The hard facts of life suggest the Greek maxim : Μηδὲν ἄγαν.*]
- 15 The whole have I considered in my fleeting existence. There is a righteous man who perisheth in consequence of his righteousness ; and there is an evil man who liveth long in consequence of his wickedness. Therefore
Be not righteous to excess,
And do not show thyself too wise.

⁶ Note that "shadow" is often a synonym of "strength," "force."

- 17 Be not evil to excess,
And be not a fool.
(For why shouldest thou die when it is not thy time?)
- 19 It is well that thou grasp this,
And that from it thou withdraw not thy hand.
(For: Whoso feareth God goeth forth out of both.)
- 20 Wisdom proveth itself stronger for a wise man
Than the riches of the ruler who are in the city.
- 21 (For there is not a man so righteous on the earth as not to sin.)
- 22 Lay not to heart all the words [men] speak,
Then wilt thou not hear thy servant when he curseth thee.
(For many times, thou knowest, thou too hast cursed others.)
- [7: 23-28. *Wisdom rare among men, entirely failing among women.*]
- 23 All the following have I proved with wisdom. I said: Let me
be wise—but it was unattainable.
- 24 Unattainable is [knowledge of] what exists;
And exceeding deep—who can find it out?
- 25 I turned myself purposely to know and spy out and seek practical wisdom, and to know wickedness [as] folly and foolish-
- 26 ishness [as] madness. And I find bitterer than death the woman who is a snare, whose heart is a net and her hands fetters. One who before God is good shall be saved from her,
- 27 but a sinner shall be taken by her. See! this have I found, saith Koheleth, [add] one to one to find the reckoning.—What my inmost self still seeketh, but I have not found:
One man out of a thousand have I found;
But a woman in all these found I not.
- 28 Only—consider this!—I have discovered that God made mankind upright, but they have found reckonings many.
- [8: 1-9. *The timely use of wisdom by the courtier, and the inevitability of the end.*]⁷
- 1 Who is like the wise man?
And who knoweth the interpretation of a matter?
A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine,
And the coarseness of his face is changed.
- 2 I [proffer this advice]—
Keep thou the behest of a king,
But having regard to the oath of God.

⁷ This paragraph seems to have been written purposely in most ambiguous terms. There is hardly a verse or a clause which may not be translated in several ways.

- 3 Tremble not before him,
Go forth and persist not in an evil affair
(For: All that he desireth he accomplisheth).
- 4 Inasmuch as the king's word ruleth,
And who saith to him: What doest thou?
- 5 He that keepeth the command knoweth no evil experience,
And a wise man's heart recognizeth the time for decision
- 6 (For to every affair there is a time for decision).
Since man's misery is great upon him;
- 7 Inasmuch as no one knoweth what shall be,
For how it shall be who can tell him?
- 8 No man hath power over the spirit to restrain it,
And no one is master over the day of death;
And there is no release in war,
And wickedness delivereth not its possessors.
- 9 All [the foregoing] have I considered, and have applied my
heart to everything which is done under the sun, at a
time when man ruleth over man to his hurt.

[8: 10-18.⁸ *The puzzle of the moral administration of the world.*]

- 10 And so, I have beheld wicked men buried; and they had gone
in and out from the Holy Place, and were renowned in the city
- 11 where they had thus acted. This too is vanity. Because there
is no sentence executed speedily upon an evil deed, on this
account the heart of mankind is bent on doing evil.

[*The author now quotes an orthodox objection.*]

- 12 "Though a sinner do evil a hundred times and prolong his
life, yet I am assured that it shall be well with those who fear
- 13 God, who fear before him. But well it shall not be with the
wicked, and he shall not prolong his days; As a shadow [is
he] who feareth not before God."

[*The author replies to this objection.*]

- 14 There is a vanity which is done upon the earth, [viz.] there
are righteous unto whom it happeneth according to the work
of the wicked; and there are wicked unto whom it happeneth
according to the work of the righteous. I remarked that this
- 15 too is vanity. So I commended cheerfulness; for there is no

⁸8: 10 is the beginning of the second part of the book, a polemic against the belief of the times.

good thing for a man under the sun but to eat and to drink and be cheerful ; for this may cleave to him in his toil during the days of his life which God giveth him under the sun.

- 16 When I applied my heart to know wisdom and to behold the activities carried on upon the earth (though both by day and
17 by night one should see no sleep with his eyes), then I considered the whole working of God, then I saw that man is not able to find out the working which is done under the sun. For however man toileth to seek it out, yet he findeth it not ; yea, even though the sage assert that he knoweth, he cannot find it out.

[9 : 1-12. *Since good men and evil fare alike, moral quality does not govern ; therefore take what enjoyment is possible, for chance is the arbiter.*]

- 1 Yea, all this have I laid to heart, to test all this, [viz.] that "the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God."

- Of neither love nor hatred is man sure, all lies before him
2 [unknown]. All fare alike. One chance befalleth the righteous and the wicked, the good and pure and the impure, him who sacrificeth and him who sacrificeth not ; like saint, like
3 sinner ; he that sweareth is as he that feareth an oath. This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, [viz.] that one event happeneth to all ; similarly, that the heart of mankind is full of evil, and madness is in their heart as long as they live,
4 and then—to the dead ! For whoever is joined to all the living—he has confidence ; for

"A living dog is better than a lion that is dead."

- 5 For the living know that they shall die ; but the dead—none of them know anything at all, and no longer have they a
6 reward. For their memory is forgotten ; their love and their hatred and their rivalry have long ago perished, and a portion—none have they any longer for ever in all that is done under the sun.

- 7 Go, eat with joy thy bread and drink with a good heart thy wine, for long ago God was graciously disposed toward thy doings.
8 At all times let thy garments shine and oil be not wanting on
9 thy head. Enjoy life with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of thy fleeting life which he giveth thee under the sun— all thy fleeting days ; for this is thy lot in life and in thy

- 10 toil in which thou toilest under the sun. All which thy hand
 findeth to do, with thy might do it; for there is no activity
 nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol whither thou goest.
- 11 Once more, I considered under the sun; that not to the swift is
 the race nor to the heroes the battle, and also not bread to the
 wise nor to the discerning wealth; similarly, the prudent find
 not favor. For
 “Time and chance befall them all.”
- 12 For indeed man knoweth not his time; like the fishes which
 are caught in an evil net, and like birds caught in the trap—
 like these are the sons of men ensnared at a time of misfortune,
 as it falleth suddenly upon them.
- [9:13-16. *Disparity in the deserts and the recompense even of wisdom.*]
 13 Also the following have I noted—[a bit of] wisdom under the
 14 sun, and it impressed me: A little city and few men in it; and
 there came against it a great king and encompassed it and
 15 built against it great intrenchments. And there was found
 therein a poor wise man, and he delivered the city by his
 16 wisdom. Yet people did not remember that poor man! Then
 I reflected: Wisdom is better than might; yet the wisdom of
 the poor is despised, and his words—none of them are heard.
- [9:17-11:8. *Koheleth's philosophy crystallized into aphorisms dealing
 with wisdom and folly, prudential religion, politics, and the
 affairs of life.*]
 9:17 The quiet words of wise men are heard above the shout of a chief
 of fools.
- 18 Wisdom is better than implements of warfare;
 But one sinner destroyeth great good.
- 10:1 Poisonous flies make loathsome the perfumer's ointment and
 cause it to ferment.
 Weightier than wisdom, than honor, is a little folly.
- 2 A wise man's understanding is right;
 But that of a fool is perverted.
- 3 So, even in the way as the fool is going along, his understand-
 ing fails him, and he saith to all that he is a fool.
- 4 If the ruler's spirit rise up against thee, yield not up thy place;
 for
 Placidity allayeth great offenses.

- 5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun,
 Like an error which proceedeth from the presence of the
 ruler.
- 6 Folly is set in great eminence,
 And rich men sit in lowliness.
- 7 I have seen servants upon horses,
 And princes walking like servants, upon the earth.
- 8 He who digs a pit may fall into it,
 And who breaks down a wall a serpent may bite.
- 9 He who removeth stones may be hurt by them ;
 He who cleaveth trees may be endangered by them.
- 10 If the iron be blunt
 And if one hath not whet the edge,
 Then must he put forth more strength.
 And wisdom is an aid to success.
- 11 If the serpent bite when there is no enchantment,
 There is no advantage to the enchanter.
- 12 Words from the mouth of a wise man are grace ;
 But the lips of a stupid person swallow him up.
- 13 The beginning of the words of his mouth are confusion,
 And the end of his utterance wicked madness.
- 14 Moreover, the stupid person multiplieth words.
 Man knoweth not that which is ;
 And what is to be after him—who shall tell him ?
- 15 The toil of fools wearieth him
 Who knoweth not how to go to the city.
- 16 Woe to thee, O land, whose king is of low origin,
 And thy princes feast in the morning !
- 17 Blessed art thou, O land, whose king is of noble birth,
 And thy princes feast in season,
 In manliness and not in drunkenness !
- 18 Through great indolence the framework falleth into ruin ;
 And through idleness of hand the house leaketh.
- 19 For merriment they provide a feast,
 And wine gladdeneth life ;
 But money provideth the whole.
- 20 Even in thy consciousness curse not a king,
 Nor in thy bedchambers curse a rich man ;
 For a bird of the heaven carrieth the sound,

- And the possessor of wings telleth the saying.
 11:1 Cast thy bread upon the surface of the waters,
 For in abundance of days thou mayest find it.
 2 Give a portion to seven, yea, even to eight:
 For thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.
 3 If the clouds be full of rain,
 Upon the earth do they pour it;
 And whether a tree fall to the south or to the north,
 The place where the tree falleth, there doth it lie.
 4 He who constantly regardeth the wind will not sow;
 And he who constantly looketh at the clouds will not reap.
 5 As thou knowest not which is the way of the wind,
 Or [of] the bones in her womb who is with child;
 Even so thou knowest not the activities of God who
 doeth the whole.
 6 In the morning sow thy seed,
 And unto the evening restrain not thy hand;
 For thou knowest not whether this or that shall prosper,
 Or whether both shall be alike good.
 7 Yea, sweet is the light,
 And good is it for the eyes to see the sun.
 8 Though a man live many years,
 In them all let him rejoice;
 That he may remember the days of darkness,
 For many shall they be!
 All that cometh is vanity!
- [11:9—12:7. *Koheleth's philosophy summed up in advice to the young.*]
 11:9 Rejoice, O young man, in the days of thy youth,
 And let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy prime,
 And walk in the ways of thy heart and in the seeing of
 thine eyes.
 Yet be assured that for all these things
 God will bring thee unto the judgment.
 10 So remove vexation from thy heart,
 And make evil pass from thy flesh;
 For youth and blackness [of hair] are vanity.
 12:1 And remember thy Creator in the days of thy prime;
 While the evil days come not,
 Or the years approach of which thou mayest say:
 I have no pleasure in them.

- 2 While the sun is not darkened,
Or the light or the moon or the stars,
Or the clouds return after the rain.
- 3 In the day when the keepers of the house tremble,
And the men of power bow themselves,
And the grinding-maidens cease because they are few,
And they that look out of the lattices be darkened.
- 4 When the double doors be shut in the street,
And the sound of the grinding-mill is low,
And the voice of the sparrow dieth away,
And all the daughters of song are humbled.
- 5 Yea, from what is high they [start back in] fear,
And terrors are in the way;
When the almond tree blooms,
And the grasshopper becomes burdensome,
And the caper-berry fails.
For man goeth to his eternal home,
And the mourners pass about in the street.
- 6 While the silver cord is not snapped asunder,
Or the golden bowl crushed,
Or the pitcher shivered at the fountain,
Or the wheel broken at the cistern.
- 7 When the dust returneth to the earth as it was,
And the spirit returneth unto God who gave it.

[12 : 8. *Conclusion.*]

SUPREME VANITY, saith Koheleth, THE WHOLE IS VANITY.

[12 : 9-14. *Appendices.*]

- 9 Moreover, because Koheleth was wise, he still taught the people
knowledge, and pondered and investigated—he arranged
- 10 proverbs in abundance. Koheleth sought to find pleasant
words and what was written uprightly—faithful words.
- 11 Words of wise men are like goads, and like nails firmly driven ;
the makers of collections are endowed from one shepherd.
- 12 And moreover, my son, be admonished ; of making books in
abundance there is no end ; and study—much—is a weariness
of the flesh.
- 13 The conclusion of the matter—the whole is heard : Fear God
and his commandments keep, for this belongs to all mankind.
- 14 For every work will God bring into judgment—upon all that
is secret, whether good or ill.